



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

JUN 30 2005

Minas M. Arabatzis, Chief
Planning Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Philadelphia District
Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390

Dear Mr. Arabatzis:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the draft environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact (EA/FONSI) for the Delaware Bay Oyster Bed Shell Planting Delaware and New Jersey.

The proposed project would entail planting up to 250,000 bushels of shell annually for three years in portions of the natural oyster beds of Delaware Bay in the states of Delaware and New Jersey, as well as the leased beds off the New Jersey Cape Shore of Delaware Bay. The specific locations will be selected by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control based on bottom surveys to be carried out at the inception of the project. Up to 25 acre plots will be planted in each state with approximately 50,000 bushels of shell per plot. The planted shell will enhance the recruitment of juvenile oysters, and increase oyster habitat. The project is also supported by the Delaware National Estuary Program, of which the Environmental Protection Agency is a stakeholder.

Based on the information in the Draft EA/FONSI, we believe that implementation of the selected plan will result in beneficial environmental impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. Should you have any questions concerning our comments, please contact Lingard Knutson, of my staff, at (212) 637-3747.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Grace Musumeci".

Grace Musumeci, Chief
Environmental Review Section
Strategic Planning and Multi-Media Programs Branch

cc: I. Purdy, DEPP-CEPB